

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

Broome to lead MBCB Executive Committee

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The 2013-14 Executive Committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) held its first organizational meeting at the Baptist Building in Jackson on Nov. 19, during which officers were elected for the coming year.

Chosen to lead the Executive Committee for 2013-14 were Doug Broome, pastor of First Church, Natchez, as chair; Lloyd Sweat, pastor of Meadowood Church, Amory, as vice-chair; and Hardy Denham, member of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, as recording secretary.

Broome was nominated by Mark Vincent, pastor of Clarke Venable Church, Decatur. Sweat was nominated by John H. Pace Jr., pastor of First Church, Terry. Denham was nominated by Rex Yancey, pastor of First Church, Ripley. All were elected by acclamation.

Members of the current Executive Committee, including those mentioned in the previous paragraph, include:

■ Gary Adams, pastor, Bridge-Way Church, Mt. Pleasant.
■ Weldon Aultman, member, First Church, Indianola.
■ Doug Broome, pastor, First Church, Natchez.
■ Clarence Cooper, pastor, Brandon Church, Brandon.
■ Charles Davis, member, Fifteenth Avenue Church, Meridian.
■ H.A. "Junior" Davis Jr., pastor, Williamsville Church, Kosciusko.
■ Hardy Denham, member, Main Street Church, Hattiesburg.



NEW OFFICERS — Elected Nov. 19 as officers of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Executive Committee for 2013-14 were (from left) Hardy Denham, member of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, recording secretary; Doug Broome, pastor of First Church, Natchez, chair; and Lloyd Sweat, pastor of Meadowood Church, Amory, vice chair. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

■ Daniel Heeringa, pastor, First Church, Houston.

■ Liz McGraw, member, Woodville Church, Woodville.

■ John H. Pace Jr., pastor, First Church, Terry.

■ Allen Simpson, pastor, First Church, Amory.

■ Lloyd Sweat, pastor, Meadowood Church, Amory.

■ Gary Wyatt, pastor, North Morton Church, Morton.

MBC Officers:

■ Mark Vincent, pastor, Clarke Venable Church, Decatur. President

■ Greg Warnock, pastor, First Church, Brookhaven. Vice President

■ Rex Yancey, pastor, First Church, Ripley. Secretary.

ExOfficio:

■ Jim Futral, executive director, MBCB.

■ Matt Buckles, president, MBC.

As specified in Article II of The Plan of Organization and Action: (Section 1) The Convention Board shall elect annually an Executive Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Executive Committee) of sixteen members which committee shall have power and authority to carry on the work of the Convention as directed by the Convention Board.

(Section 2) The Executive Committee shall be the trustee of all Convention funds and properties and is authorized and empowered to receive, hold in trust, and administer all such funds, trusts, and properties not otherwise provided for. As such trustees, the Executive Committee shall at all times be subject to the direction and control of the Convention Board.



TOUGH ROAD AHEAD — Jesusa Booc on northern Cebu Island cradles her one-month-old baby Ella Mae as she and others in the Filipino village of Bangon recount Typhoon Haiyan's Nov. 8 rampage and ponder the struggle ahead to recover. Southern Baptists have begun responding with personnel who were already on the ground and a Rapid Assessment Team that is now in country. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

Miss. Baptists standing by

Southern Baptists begin Philippines relief effort

BANGON, Philippines (BP and local reports) — A Baptist pastor found Jesusa and Michael Booc with their four children in the ruins of a destroyed chapel, all of them sheltered under a table covered by a tarp. The chapel's walls were blown off during Typhoon Haiyan, one of the largest storms in recorded history, and lay in a stack on the side of the battered structure.

The face of the Booc's one-month-old baby Ella Mae was sunburned from prolonged sun exposure since Nov. 8, when the typhoon's fury swept across Cebu and other islands in the Philippines. The Boocs' home now sits in a crumpled heap. All of northern Cebu looks as if a rampaging giant has visited. Thousands upon thousands of banana trees — the source of income for many villagers — were crushed. Electricity poles are down, the wires twisted and lying in roadways. A brand new gymnasium's roof looked as if the giant had sat on it.

A house was left completely upside down. Hundreds of houses were smashed as if they'd gone

through a trash compactor. Still others lay on their sides.

Don Gann, consultant in the Men's Ministry Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board in Jackson, explained that Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) is coordinated internationally by Baptist Global Response (BGR) and a Rapid Assessment Team made up of disaster relief trained volunteers from Texas and Georgia is in country to support local Philippine Baptist churches, associations, and conventions.

"SBDR international response is done through state conventions that are on call during assigned months. Each month, two state conventions take the lead. Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief is the first responder internationally during the months of January and July.

"Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief does not self-deploy, but will work in partnership with Philippine Baptists, BGR, IMB, the North American Mission Board, and state convention leadership to support our partners.

"At present, Mississippi Bap-

tist Disaster Relief is standing by to mobilize as requested," Gann said.

Mississippi Baptists can contribute to the relief effort through the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Make checks payable

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Whose side are you on?

Another football season is about to pass since the scandal at Penn State erupted. We all remember the storyline. Jerry Sandusky worked for decades for the school's icon, head football coach Joe Paterno, who himself had been coaching at the university since the 1960s. Sandusky was convicted of molesting young boys, allegedly using his influence in the athletic department to groom and seduce the children.

The sordid details of what went on in the showers of the athletic department, in the basement of the Sandusky home, or road trips with the Penn State football team, and who knows where else are too repulsive to describe in a family newspaper. Suffice to say that many young lives were irrevocably altered by the evil actions of this man they trusted.

Almost as horrifying as the molestations were the actions taken by university officials at the highest levels to protect the prestige of the university and to keep secure their own jobs and reputations, at the expense of the children.

According to a highly critical report compiled by former Federal Bureau of Investigation head Louis Freeh at the behest of the university and disputed by the Paterno family, officials at the top of the athletic department and even the university president were aware for many years of Sandusky's sexual exploitation of children on the grounds of the university.

In Freeh's opinion, there was more than enough evidence to move on Sandusky at least a decade ago — and probably much longer. A credible report of a naked Sandusky and an equally naked boy in Penn State athletic department showers should have been enough to prompt athletic leaders and university administrators to action. It didn't.

"Our most saddening and sobering finding is the total disregard for the safety and welfare of Sandusky's child victims by the most senior leaders at Penn State," Freeh said in releasing the report. "The most powerful men at Penn State failed to take any steps for 14 years to protect the children who Sandusky victimized."

God forbid the same could be said about some of our churches, even our own Mississippi Baptist churches. Could we ever hear these

words spoken about one of our churches in Mississippi: "Our most saddening and sobering finding is the total disregard for the safety and welfare of the child victims by the most senior leaders of this church."

Let that statement ring in your ears for a little while, and then think about your church. Are there security programs in place whenever children are under the care of your church? Is there a screening process in place to root out sex offenders before they can get access to children? Is there a church staff member (or volunteer in many churches) who is personally responsible for seeing that these measures are in place, utilized, and frequently updated?

Churches and schools are teeming with potential victims for pedophiles. Schools have a defined number of teachers and other staffers trained to secure and protect the children in their care, but is the one harried volunteer in your church's preschool department on Sunday morning up to the task of protecting all the children who show up?

Just as importantly, what would you do if you personally witnessed a criminal act against a child on your church's grounds? What if you were told of the criminal act by someone else? Would you sweep it under the rug, as the leaders at Penn State did? Would you report it to law enforcement and child welfare officials, as required by law?

Would you keep quiet to protect the church? Could you be intimidated by "senior leaders" to keep your mouth shut about it? Would you be part of a wide-ranging cover up? Would you stop to consider what's at stake for the church, or would you immediately and instinctively act to protect the child?

These are not flippant questions. Any one of us could happen upon a situation that would momentarily stun us, but what would we do when we came to our senses?

All it took to bring down an American institution was one evil man, and just enough people to cover up his misdeeds. At your church, would you be counted among those who protected the children, or among those who sacrificed the children?

Think about it now, before it happens and while you have time. Then make your decision.

It's about vision and mission

To create a culture in your church, business, or nonprofit organization, you must be clear about two things — your vision and mission.

Vision is a future picture of what you see or what you want to become. Mission tells you why your church, business, or nonprofit organization exists and what it does. An organization's culture, then, is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that flow from vision and mission.

As Southern Baptists, our missional vision, or mission statement, is clear: "As a convention of churches, our missional vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations."

When your mission and vision are clear, then you establish a set of core values. Core values are how we behave, and how we treat each other. These values are our guiding principles. They guide us in our decision-making processes and help align our decisions with the future we want our organization to experience.

For Southern Baptists, our core values are:

- Christ-likeness.
- Truth.
- Unity.
- Relationships.
- Trust.
- Future.
- Local church.
- Kingdom.

We as individual Christians can impact our church and organizational culture through our vision, mission, and values. Jesus, for example, gathered a group of disenfranchised people (His disciples) and told them, "You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14). Jesus gave us:

- Grace.
- Unconditional love.
- Forgiveness.

As Christians, since we have experienced these values we can't help but share the wonder of His grace, His love, and His forgiveness with others. As we share, display love to those around us, forgive our neighbor, and act in grace to those who offend us, we gently salt and flavor the culture around us.



Guest opinion
with Andy Wilson

I was fortunate to work at Walmart under authentic servant leaders like Sam Walton, former CEO David Glass, and former vice chairman Don Soderquist — leaders who had a passion for their purpose and who consistently practiced their values.

I was taught to lead from my heart as well as my head and to build long-term relationships with our associates, vendors, and customers. Leadership is relationships, and we had the self-discipline to get results as we integrated our business conversation with our values conversation.

You can have the courage to do the right thing and the courage to change the culture around you. It will take hard work and, most of all, teamwork. That is why we must step boldly into our leadership role in the church or the organization we lead with passion to unite others around us.

Authentic leaders know true north. They have a moral compass and are prepared to stay the course despite challenges and disappointments. They are more concerned about serving others than they are about their own success or recognition.

No individual achievement can equal the pleasure of leading a group of people to achieve a worthy goal. When you cross the finish line together there is a deep satisfaction that it was your leadership that made the difference.

As pastors, ministers, lay leaders, and business leaders, our goal is worthy to reach America and the world for Jesus Christ.

Wilson is executive leader of ministry and operations at Cross Church in Springdale, Ar., and a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. He is the former head of Walmart's human resources division.

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Missionaries ride out historic storm in Philippines – literally

TACLOBAN, Philippines (BP) — Suzie Miller gripped the mattress floating on the second level of her rapidly flooding home, not knowing whether she and her husband would survive Typhoon Haiyan.

Suzie and her husband Carl, among 26 International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries in Philippines, knew they were exactly where God wanted them during the massive storm. The entire experience, Suzie said, was a testament to God's provision and the power of prayer.

As the Nov. 8 typhoon engulfed the Tacloban peninsula where they minister, Suzie said it sounded like a semitrailer was passing. The torrential wind and rain shattered glass windows in their home. Water began pouring in from the deluge and from storm surge waves pushed inland from the ocean.

The first thing Suzie grabbed was a prayer journal she has had since college. Upstairs, the Millers climbed with their two dogs onto the mattress floating in the water in their bedroom.

They had just returned from Cebu City, where they had the option to remain until the typhoon passed. They believed God wanted them to go home to Tacloban.

For Suzie's birthday on Nov. 3, her son and daughter-in-law bought Dr Pepper soft drinks — a rare treat in the Philippines and a favorite of the Millers. IMB missionaries Stan and Dottie Smith also had given the Millers some Dr Peppers as a birthday present.

Stranded on their mattress, Suzie said she and Carl felt like they were dying of thirst as the wind and rain torpedoed their home. Prior to the storm, Suzie placed three Dr Peppers on a desk. As the water rose in their room, the Dr Peppers floated over to the mattress.

"We just opened a Dr Pepper and shared it," Suzie said. "There is nothing that helps you out like drinking Dr Pepper in a storm."

Power of prayer

Suzie said God brought a Scripture verse to mind during the experience: "Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck" (Psalm 69:1, ESV).

"I never thought about literally praying that prayer," she said.

The water level in the Millers' split-level home rose to more than seven feet deep. They watched as their furniture bobbed up and down.

"[We were] praying for God's mercy, but also realizing if we didn't make it, we chose to leave Cebu and come back," Suzie recounted. "We felt very confident in that decision. We trusted Him to take care of us, whatever His will was."

That confidence didn't keep

her from feeling afraid at times, Suzie said. Surge after surge of water pummeled their home. "When the water was coming up, we had no idea if we were going to survive or not," she said.

Suzie suggested to Carl that they crawl out the window to escape their flooding house. "Honkey, we can't get out. If we get out, we will die," Carl replied.

The typhoon's winds were so strong that they broke gauges used to measure their speed. As the Millers weathered the onslaught in their home, a close friend clung to the rafters of what remained of his house, hanging on for dear life as wave after wave pummeled him. He miraculously survived.

"I hate to be closed in, that whole panic of being closed in and trapped and drowning," Suzie said. "My husband, he was such a dear, he said, 'You know, we just pray and ask God to save us and that is all we can do.'"

Suzie said they started praying out loud. "I've heard of folks crying out to God, and that is what we did. [We were] crying out to God."

After the Millers cried out to God, the water began to recede but another wave soon poured in. The couple continued praying. The water receded and did not rise again.

"We saw all of our furniture floating around and then it all settled down," Suzie said. "God saved us."

A real Thanksgiving

After the rain and water subsided, the Millers crawled out a window but quickly retreated back inside because the wind was still so powerful that it hurt when it hit their skin. A car was washed up against their back door. The Millers' car was wedged in their fence.

The couch was on top of the piano. The china cabinet fell, one end propped against a stationary bike. The only dishes that broke were cheaper items purchased recently. The 33-year-old dishes from their wedding survived unscathed.

Despite the tragedy, God brought the Millers' moments of humor. Carl lost his glasses in the storm and had to wear Suzie's pink pair. Most of Carl's shoes washed away; all he could find was one boot so he borrowed a purple sandal of Suzie's to wear outside.

Of 200 books the Millers own, a copy of David Jeremiah's What in the World Is Going On was plastered on the wall. The dining room table floated up, remained level, and then floated back down as the water eventually receded. Amazingly, none of the items on the table fell off.

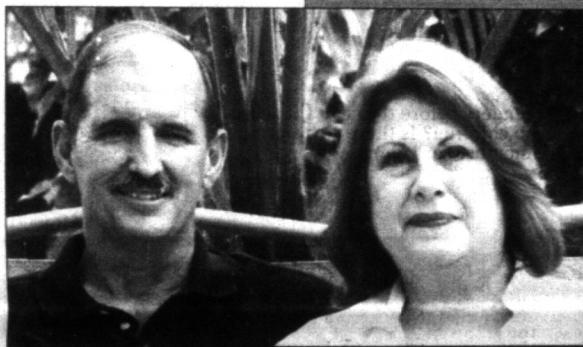
The Millers' freezer also floated through their home. The freezer

remained sealed, preserving a turkey they had purchased for the upcoming holidays.

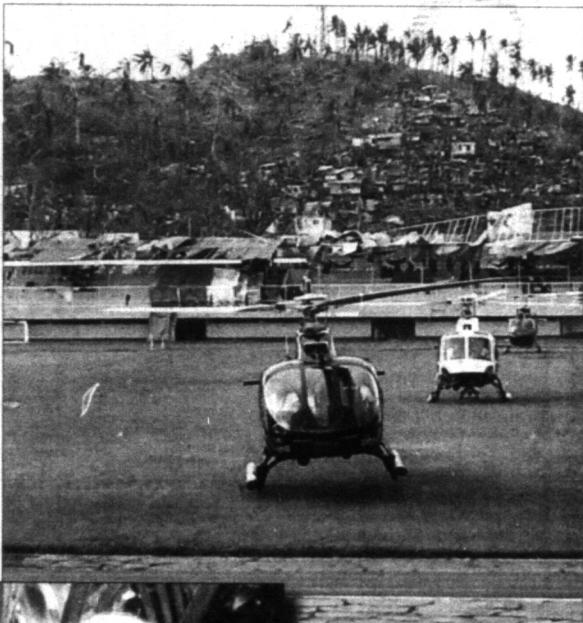
However, instead of keeping the turkey for themselves, the Millers gave it to their neighbors who were struggling to feed their family. The neighbors prepared the turkey and insisted the Millers join them for turkey adobo. (Adobo is a popular seasoning used in the Philippines.)

A Christmas warehouse released its storage of queso, macaroni, and canned fruit cocktail. The Millers and their neighbors ate them as side dishes.

"This is our Thanksgiving turkey. We are giving thanks that we all survived," Suzie told her



TESTAMENT — International Mission Board missionaries Carl and Suzie Miller rode through Typhoon Haiyan Nov. 8 in their home on the Tacloban peninsula in Philippines. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)



HELP ARRIVES — In Tacloban, Philippines, where International Mission Board missionaries Suzie and Carl Miller (left photo) live and minister, Typhoon Haiyan generated almost complete destruction. Relief aid has begun to arrive by helicopter in the region of the storm's greatest devastation in the island nation. (BP photo courtesy of Philippines Official Gazette)

corpses of the family remained inside, crushed.

Entire communities were wiped out. Cars were upside down. A mini-semitrailer rested on top of a tree. Around the beach areas, only coconut trees remained. Gnarled steel girders protruded from spaces where buildings once stood. People tried to bathe in standing water on the road.

"It was just destruction everywhere you looked," Suzie said.

The Millers knew they were being blanketed in prayer. Prior to the storm, they sent an email to their network of churches in South Carolina and Texas asking for prayer. They also had requested prayer from their extended family.

E-mail inboxes buzzed with prayers and well-wishes for the Millers, as did Facebook and Twitter feeds. "We could really tell that people were praying," Suzie said. "There was such an uncanny peace in the midst of everything happening."

"I think it is the grace that God gives when you are in a crisis situation. He walks through it with you. We just knew God was in control."

The Millers boarded a military aircraft on Tuesday for Manila, where they are recuperating and making plans for relief work. Staying in Tacloban became dangerous after the storm passed, as looting and violence over the lack of food is increasing.

members were alive and well.

"It was a great time to see Filipinos care for each other," Suzie said. "It is kind of like Acts — everyone had everything in common, and no one had anything that was their own."

Suzie said she never doubted the decision to return to Tacloban. "It wasn't 'Oh why, oh why did we come back?'" she said. "It was just a peace."

It was important to go through the tragedy with her neighbors, Suzie said, rather than leaving and letting the neighbors go through the tragedy alone. If they did that, she said, "You come back as an outsider to minister."

Instead, the Millers experienced the life-altering disaster with the people they love and serve. Without cell phone access or electricity, they heard they could make phone calls at the airport. On Monday, they set off on foot, walking for several miles.

They found their beloved church decimated. The Millers walked past leveled homes and corpses. The house next to theirs was gone. Tin, boards, nails, and wires littered the streets. They passed a home that had caved in. The

Sometime ago I wrote an article concerning pastors and their responsibilities. I also addressed the responsibility of the church to encourage and follow the pastor as he leads. While there are no perfect pastors and no perfect congregations, a large majority of pastors are right hearted and caring shepherds who stay focused on leading their people in the Jesus way. I must say that there are also a large number of our congregations who recognize that and want to be a part of doing something magnificent to the glory of Jesus.

While I received a number of letters, calls and emails concerning that article, the response that was of the greatest significance to me personally was from one of our precious ladies. She was very positive about the article, but she pointed out to me that one thing may have been left out. I did not include anything about the difficulty of being the wife of the pastor. If the pastor has a difficult job, being the wife of a pastor is difficult on steroids. I entitled this article the #1 Staff Member simply because the pastor's companion is without question the most significant person in his life whether he is trying to help raise children or lead a church. The wife does not sign on to be a staff member, but when God brings the two of them together she becomes more significant in what God is going to do through the pastor's life than either she or he can ever imagine.

I have been blessed all of my life for I have been influenced, inspired, affected and corrected by a pastor's wife. I was raised by a pastor's wife, married a lady who was willing to be a pastor's wife, have a daughter-in-law who is helping her pastor husband and beyond that I have known hundreds of wonderful, gracious ladies who are filling that impossible task with grace and style. One of the things that complicates the role of the pastor's wife is the total package that they are expected to be. They are expected to be a wonderful person, a wife to a husband who is never on schedule, maybe a mom to a number of children, a friend to

#1 Staff Member

people who need someone who cares, a church member who is expected to go to more meetings than anyone else in the church except her husband and a participant in every activity that comes along.

Beyond that she may have a full-time job and fill a role of a professional person. Of course, she is expected to balance all of this, give at least 36 hours a day in the Lord's service, raise wonderful, gracious, sweet-spirit, and bright children, keep her husband on track and smile through every endeavor. I am sorry, but it is impossible to do. She can be a great person and do many things but she cannot do everything that everybody expects of her. Just think with me about the issues with which she may be struggling.

First, she is uncalled but committed. Now when I say that she is uncalled I am not saying that God doesn't work in her life and maybe called her to a special life of ministry with her husband. But whenever the church voted to call him as their pastor, the majority of the people treat the wife and the children as though they are just a part of the package. That is a non-spoken assumption that people make, and it is not good. If a church is in a position to hire a maintenance person to work full-time fixing, mending and repairing, no one would ever give a thought

to the fact that his wife should be there helping him all along the way. If you hire someone to head up food services at your church, probably no one gives a thought to the fact that the spouse or children should be involved in all of the preparation and serving of the food. Even the wives of other staff members are not as high profile or expected to be everything to everybody like the pastor's wife is. Yet the vote that was taken on him to come and be the shepherd of the flock somehow spreads to her. It is remarkable that so many of them are so committed to the Lord, to their husband and family that they do everything that they can to fill all of the expectations. Still it is awkward and there is a degree of unfairness.

A second thing that often becomes a part of the role of the pastor's wife is that she is generally uncompensated but caring. The pastor's wife is presumed upon probably more than anyone in the church consistently and long-term. While other people may have opportunity to decide whether or not they want to participate or attend, she is often expected to be at every wedding, funeral, anniversary celebration, worship service and major event whether it is with children, youth, singles or senior adults. Often she is not asked whether or not she wants to

be a participant, it is just presumed that she can and will. So she prepares food for some special things, directs weddings, helps with setting up, entertains while people are there and then offers to help with the cleanup. All of which, I am sure most people appreciate but for which the compensation is rare.

A third issue that arises is that the pastor's wife is rarely complimented but always constant. I appreciate so much one of our fine ladies calling my attention to what I had left out for it speaks to this very issue of how rarely the wife of the pastor may be complimented. The people may show appreciation and thank the pastor for leading, praying at certain civic functions, being in the limelight at some gathering, preaching every Sunday, and leading a group of people in a grief experience. The wonderful spirit in his wife may well be making a bigger difference than anything that he says or does as she performs the wonder of making a difference in people's homes and hearts again and again, but no one stops to say a word of thanks.

Ladies and gentlemen, the pastor and his wife deserve whatever support, encouragement, compliments and blessings you can give. Now I hope that you will not wait until Thanksgiving, Christmas, or some special event but that you will start right now. You do not even have to wait until Sunday. Call, write or do something special for your pastor's wife. Someone may think or say that our pastor's wife does not do all of those things that you have said. My response would be twofold. No one is capable of doing all of those things. I assure you that she is doing a lot more to try to keep body, soul and the work of God together than you could ever imagine. She deserves your blessings and praise. When we fail to do so, it says more about us than it does about her. So figure out a way to be a blessing to the lady who blesses your pastor.

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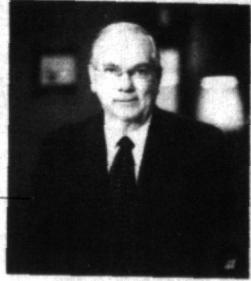
College News

(At left) **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** will help sponsor Christmas on Ice this year. Last year, Christmas on Ice attracted more than 105,000 people to skate, enjoy holiday concerts and hear the story of the birth of Jesus. The rink in Madison, Mississippi will double in size to 14,400 square-feet starting in mid-November. With a bigger facility, more concerts, a taller Christmas tree, two ice slides and much more, organizers anticipate 150,000 visitors will make their way to the 51-day festival beginning its second season on November 16.



Jim Rosenblatt, who has provided extraordinary service as dean at the **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE**

School of Law for more than a decade, will leave his post in August 2014 to become a law professor on the Jackson campus. The leader of MC Law since August 2003 ranks among the USA's top 20 longest serving law deans.



WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY Alpha Chi chapter was named a Star Chapter for the 2012-13 academic year, and will be formally recognized along with other Star Chapters at the national convention in St. Louis, Mo., March 27-29. Only 15 percent of the more than 300 Alpha Chi chapters receive this honor.

Common Core and the MS Department of Education

Last month I wrote the article *Common Core Education in Mississippi* that pointed out valid problems and concerns with Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In addition to untested and unproven standards, also identified was immoral curriculum and the violation of parental and student's right to privacy and religious freedom.

My conclusion called for halting any further implementation of Common Core and related parts such as the PARCC annual school performance assessment. I received great response from educators, parents, grandparents and concerned taxpayers all over the state.

I also received a letter via email from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) that I made "glaring allegations" and "unfounded criticisms" in my article. After I examined the MDE's claims, none of them were valid and most allegations were based on straw man fallacies when an accused takes another person's original position and distorts it in such a way to make and then attack a misrepresentation of the facts. Below I state two MDE claims and a response.

MDE Claim: "Mr. Chambers states that claims outlined in the article 'have been investigated and the concerns are valid.' However, prior to writing the article, Mr. Chambers had not discussed any of the concerns with the Mississippi Department of Education staff members."

CAC Response: The validity of any analysis does not require dialogue with any party subject to the analysis. (If I see a pothole in the highway, I don't have to call the highway commissioner to tell me if I really saw a pothole.) The MDE questioning the validity of my analysis based on discussing these issues with them is irrelevant.

But I actually communicated with MDE employees about Common Core at a meeting I attended on August 19, 2013, sponsored and led by the MDE. I spoke directly with them and some of my questions were addressed at the meeting. My question is in bold below, and the MDE's response is in italics and a reflection follows.

What about the unfunded mandate for Common Core State Standards and technology? The MDE, Dr. House, answered this by saying, "Finding the funding for technology—both hardware, software, infrastructure of all kinds is still an issue and we are still trying to determine what the price tag is. No

**Mississippi Department of Education
Proposed AMO (Proficiency Index) Objectives by Subgroup for the State
(Option A in waiver - Reduce gap by half in 6 years)**

Subgroup	2011 (Baseline)	Annual Increase	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
ALL	70	2.50	73	75	78	80	83	85
IEP	40	5.00	45	50	55	60	65	70
LEP	58	3.50	62	65	69	72	76	79
Economically Disadvantaged	62	3.17	65	68	72	75	78	81
Asian	86	1.17	87	88	90	91	92	93
Black	60	3.33	63	67	70	73	77	80
Hispanic	69	2.58	72	74	77	79	82	85
Native American	69	2.58	72	74	77	79	82	85
White	80	1.67	82	83	85	87	88	90

state that we know of has quite figured out how to determine that because it varies so much from district to district."

My response to this is that financial stewardship is a fundamental tenant of Christianity, and it also extends to the realm of economics (Matt 25:14ff; Luke 14:25ff). For the MDE to adopt educational measures in which there is no known starting point or ending point to the cost is an unethical approach to an unfunded mandate.

What about the lack of educational and financial resources to fully implement CCSS? Dr. House said, "It's a real dilemma for districts that have limited resources and I don't have a perfect answer for that and if I did I assure you I'd be out there somewhere with fairy dust sprinkling it on everybody."

Along these same lines of mystical solutions for unfunded ideas, acting MS Superintendent, Dr. Carey Wright, who also strongly endorsed Common Core, stated that "If I were able to waive a magic wand, I would have universal prekindergarten for age 3 and up." What Dr. Wright of the MDE desires for pre-K is to place 3-year-old children under the domain of federal and state government education, and, to be clear, she is not talking about mother's-day-out programs.

Unfunded mandates for nationalized education standards are reminiscent of nationalized healthcare. This time it is education nationalized through "common" standards and nationalized testing. The American Federation of Teachers president Randi Weingarten recently said, "You think the Obamacare implementation is bad? The implementation of the Common Core is far worse."

How will CCSS elevate lower performing schools to higher performance? Dr. House answered, "What we are

On the web

For an extended version of this column, please visit www.christianaction.com/blog/comments/common_core_and_the_ms_department_of_education

seeing is that many of our lower performing schools are ramping it up. You do know we have something called conservatism.... So if you are a "D" or an "F" school you are going to get intensive intervention from the MDE. The expectations [are] that you raise those scores. Again, ramping up is going to be very, very high. And, so that means that if you are at the bottom you have to work doubly hard to rise up to a reasonable level."

Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves agrees with the implementation of Common Core standard and the PARCC assessment and said he will "monitor" it. Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves also said, "You are going to continue to hear stories of kids who perhaps had not struggled in the past that are struggling now. That's because we are raising the standards, we are making it more difficult. I'm convinced that over time Mississippi kids will rise up and meet those increased level of expectations."

More than fairy dust, magic wands, data manipulation and rose-colored glasses will be needed when it comes to realistically improving MS school performance. The MDE reported in 2013 that 60% of the schools in MS graded "C" or lower, and 92 received an "F." Thirty of these failing schools are facing a state takeover or conservatorship. Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves also recently said that within successful school districts there are 45,000 children trapped in failing schools. A rational conclusion to these comments is that if students in failing schools

cannot pass an exam at lower standards, then he or she cannot pass a more rigorous exam with higher standards.

MDE Claim: "We have no race-based standards. Mr. Chambers asserts that it is "an unjust and immoral attack on a student's psyche" to have annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for subgroups of students..."

CAC Response: This is a straw man. The real truth is there are race-based "objectives" the MDE agreed to as a guide for the U.S. Dept. of Education to measure academic proficiency among different groups of people. (See inset chart). Obviously, the MDE and federal government concluded that it will take 12 years for the lowest race-based subgroup to reach the same proficiency as the highest.

But this is an outright sin against God and man to demoralize a race by suggesting they have a lower mental ability to excel than any other race-based subgroup. In the eyes of God, all are of equal, moral worth and are made in the image of God.

Gov. Jeb Bush supports nationalized Common Core standards and assessments, and he founded The Foundation for Excellence in Education which held an educational summit this past October. MS Senate Education Chairmen Sen. Gray Tollison, who also supports Common Core, was a panelist on grading systems for schools, and Mayor Rahm Emanuel was the closing keynote speaker at the summit. Interestingly, Gov. Bush's foundation also received a \$2 million dollar grant last month from The Gates Foundation "to support an outreach and public information project that builds support and understanding of the Common Core State Standards and aligned assessments in states."

But even Microsoft's Bill Gates recently admitted that, "It would be great if our education stuff

worked, but that we won't know for probably a decade." Based on Bill Gates' gross admission, this nationalized educational laboratory experiment will likely be conducted till your child or grandchild graduates from high school—unless you help legislative action take place in the 2014 MS Legislative session.

Gov. Mike Huckabee also supports Common Core, and he said on June 3, 2013, that "States and local school districts will determine how they want to teach kids, what curriculum to use, and which textbooks to use." Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves made a similar statement this month that "if you don't like the books that your kids are reading in school, you don't need to go complain to Washington.... You need to go to your school board, your local superintendent because either the school board or the teacher made that decision."

The rhetoric that curriculum is locally controlled sounds good, but it does not match emerging facts. Two months before Lt. Gov. Reeves' comments, the ACLU had already forced the Ohio Department of Education to keep the controversial and pornographic-containing book, *The Bluest Eye*, on the state's Common Core reading list. Gov. Huckabee and Lt. Gov. Reeves' comments are incorrect. MS cannot conclude that we have absolute statewide and local control over curriculum. If we think we do, then we better be aware of what's happening.

Private, parochial, and home school students are not immune from Common Core. In a phone conversation I had with Dr. David Coleman, who is known as one of the premier architects of Common Core and president of the College Board, he told me the college entrance exam they oversee will be aligned to Common Core standards. This means non-public school children will be at a predetermined disadvantage when taking college entrance exams. Your religious freedom/right to teach your child as you wish is eroding.

The 2014 MS Legislative session is just around the corner, and this will be a primary focus of Christian Action this upcoming session. Go to <https://votervoice.net/CAC/Home> to sign up for email alerts. Also, you can receive text alerts on your cell phone by texting CAC to 601-297-7077.

The author of this analysis, Rob Chambers, serves as consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or rchambers@christianaction.com.

Just for the Record



DESOTO CHURCH, CLARKE CITY, held their fall festival Oct. 26. Shown are Gracie & Britt Sumrall.



TOOMSUBA CHURCH, LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION, held an outreach event at Lake Tom Bailey, Meet Jesus at the Lake, with 20 church members and 80 from the community attending.



MAYBANK CHURCH, LEBANON ASSOCIATION, ordained minister of music Charles Eric Wright to the gospel ministry Nov. 10. Shown are Bud Swindoll, pastor Jon Kittrell, Wright, and Ralph Sanford.



RANKIN ASSOCIATION held its 121st annual meeting at Grace Church, Brandon, Oct. 17. Guest soloist was Candy Lee Dobbs and guest speaker was Ron Meeks, Blue Mountain College. Shown are AMD Allen Stephens and Meeks.



HARMONY CHURCH, LINCOLN COUNTY, held pastor appreciation Sunday Oct. 27. Shown is pastor Owen King, who has been pastor for five years. King received a plaque commemorating the occasion.



JUNIPER GROVE CHURCH, POPLARVILLE, ordained Rob Hunt to the gospel ministry Oct. 20. He is the church's youth pastor. Shown is Hunt and pastor Breaux Tageant.



MORRISON CHAPEL CHURCH, CLEVELAND, ordained Bob Goodman as deacon Oct. 13. Shown are pastor John Thomas, Betty Goodman, and Goodman.



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, held a trunk or treat for the children of the church including treats, games, activities, meal, and devotion. Hal Hatten, pastor.



DORSEY CHURCH, MANTACHIE, ordained Stuart Woods and Duane Cayson as deacons Oct. 13. Shown are Shelly Woods, Woods, Cayson, and Melissa Cayson.

Staff Changes



MEADVILLE CHURCH, MEADVILLE, has called Matthew Alexander as pastor. He is shown with minister of music Chuck McMinn, left.



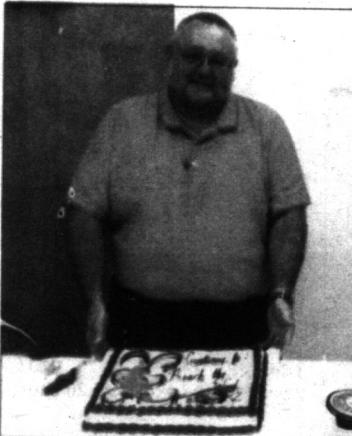
FIRST CHURCH, CLEVELAND, has called Brad Beckwith as pastor. He is shown with his wife DeAnna, daughter Samantha, and twin boys Liam and Kaiden.

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COUNTY LINE CHURCH, OVERT, has called Matthew Martin as pastor. He is shown with his wife, Melanie, and daughters Bailey and Ella.

Just for the Record



SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB, recognized pastor Jimmy T. Smith, Jr., for pastor appreciation and his birthday with a reception Oct. 13.



NEW HOPE CHURCH, FOXWORTH, presented Jimmy Thomas a plaque Oct. 27 in recognition of 50 years of service as deacon.



The RA's of **GRANDVIEW CHURCH, PEABODY** worked two months making Christmas ornaments, with donations from the ornaments going to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.



MORRISON CHAPEL CHURCH, CLEVELAND, ordained Zachary McCain as associate student pastor Oct. 20. Shown are pastor John Thomas, Adrienne McCain, and McCain.

CEDAR GROVE CHURCH, COLUMBIA, ordained Nakia Fortenberry as deacon Oct. 27. Shown are Fortenberry and Todd Sumrall.

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In other Church News:

► **Southside Church, Vicksburg**, is hosting The Men of Music in concert Nov. 24, 6 p.m. Love offering.

► **Trinity Church, Hernando**, will host the Dixie Echoes in concert Nov. 22, 7 p.m. Love offering.

BIBLIOCRYPT

PCS EOHG SOH NCWGHLL KN SOH SDAH
EBL YKAH, MKJ LHGS NKXSO ODL LKG,
ABJH KN B EKABG, ABJH CGJHX SOH

WBE.

MBWBSDBGL NKCX: NKCX

Clue: N = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 24:46

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



IN MOURNING — In a Jordanian city along the border with Syria, a refugee mother weeps for the son she lost during recent violence in Syria and for those who remain in that troubled land. (BP photo)

Christians 'easy targets' for extremists in war-torn Syria

DAMASCUS, Syria (BP) — For Hanna, a Syrian Christian mother living in Damascus, the country's civil war is more than just statistics and news articles.

"Every day when I walk to the school I work at I hold my breath; every minute something can happen," she wrote in a first-person account to Open Doors USA, an organization supporting persecuted Christians.

"Many streets are closed and when you walk the streets you see the traces of the battle: little fires all over the streets. Also in our house you see the traces of the war: we already noticed a bullet hole in our guest room, but recently I also discovered one in the room of my girls."

As the conflict between President Bashar al-Assad's forces and rebel fighters rages on, the country's Christians fear they are becoming easy targets for Islamic extremists.

"In fact attacks on churches happen a lot now. They are also targeting Christians," Hanna wrote. "Many of them are killed or kidnapped. When they are kidnapped they ask their families for ransom or they force them to convert to Islam. Women are often raped."

The people that return from such events are traumatized. One of the men I know that came back from a kidnapping didn't speak a word since he came back. He is crying a lot. Nobody knows what happened to him."

Nina Shea, who directs the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom, wrote in the National Review Online about the plight of Syria's Christians.

She relayed a report by the Vatican news agency Fides about the discovery of a mass grave containing 30 bodies near the ancient Christian town of Sadad. Since Oct. 21, rebel-allied Islamist militias have killed 45 people there in total.

"Surviving relatives and friends uncovered the graves after government forces recently recaptured the town from rebels," Shea wrote. "Those killed were reported by the local Syriac Orthodox metropolitan, who presided over 30 of their funerals this week, to be Christian civilians, including women and children."

St. Theodore's Syriac Orthodox Church, along with other churches and a monastery, have been desecrated, Shea wrote, and about 2,500 families have fled Sadad. Rebels allied with al-Qaeda have not been shy about imposing their harsh view of Islam on areas under their control.

The town of Raqqa, CNN reported, formerly was one of Syria's most liberal cities before Islamist radicals took over. Now locals call it Tora Bora.

After attacks by Assad's regime on the town, moderate rebels were pushed aside by foreign jihadist rebels from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a militant group with links to al-Qaeda. They started indoctrinating children with their extreme view of Islam. Edicts began springing up on the town walls. No smoking. No cameras. Women could not walk alone or style or show their hair.

A man called Adnan, whose name was changed for fear of

his safety, was caught writing anti-ISIS graffiti and filming. The jihadists dragged him into a church they had torched and turned into an ISIS base.

"Every 15 minutes, someone poured water on me, electrocuted me, kicked me, then walked out," he told CNN, adding that the screams of other tortured prisoners was worse than his own pain. "When a person is tortured in front of you, you feel responsible. That's the hardest. One guy still inside used to call me Dad as I taught him about democracy."

Shea wrote that Syria's top Catholic leader, Gregorios III Laham, the Melkite Greek Catholic patriarch of Antioch and all the East, estimates more than 450,000 of Syria's roughly 1.75-2 million Christians have fled their homes since 2011.

Hanna wrote to Open Doors USA that she and her husband struggled with that decision. "As a mother and as a wife I want to stay. Every time my husband and I pray, God gives us a burden on our heart: stay in Syria

"He has things to do for us here. God will bless Syria, know this for sure. He is already blessing us. Every time we go to church, the church is full; people come together in times of despair."

Many new refugees from Muslim backgrounds are appearing at her church, she wrote. They say they have lost everything, but in Jesus have found what is most important.

"The situation is hard," Hanna wrote, "but we are living by faith."

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MS POSITIONS

MONROE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS RE-SEEKING RESUMES FOR ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR until December 15, 2013. Send resumes to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 540, Amory, MS 38821, Attn: Allen Simpson. Or email: allen@bcamory.org. A job description is available by email.

THE JASPER COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS NOW ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR. THIS IS A PART-TIME POSITION WITH THE OFFICE BEING OPEN TWO DAYS A WEEK. ALL INTERESTED PARTIES PLEASE SUBMIT A RESUME TO JCBA, P.O. BOX 385, Bay Springs, MS 39422 OR EMAIL TO jasperba@yahoo.com.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SATARTIA IS PRAYING AND SEARCHING FOR A PIANIST. Please send information to FBC of Satartia P.O. Box 42 Satartia, Mississippi 39162

SEEKING POSITION - Minister of Music-Part-Time/Within 100 miles of Grenada, MS. 662-614-5500

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN KOSCIUSKO, MS IS SEEKING 2 FULL TIME POSITIONS: A FULL TIME CHILDREN'S MINISTER AND A FULL TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 70, Kosciusko, MS 39090

STUDENT MINISTER - HEUCKS RETREAT BAPTIST CHURCH OF BROOKHAVEN, MS. IS SEEKING PART-TIME STUDENT MINISTER. Send resumes to Heucks Retreat Baptist Church, 2167 Heucks Retreat Rd., Brookhaven, MS or email to kparvin@hrbaptist.net c/o Personnel Committee.

STUDENT MINISTER OF YOUTH/CHILDREN — New Hope Baptist Church in the Clarkdale Community of Lauderdale County, MS is seeking God's Man for the full time position of Student Minister of Youth/Children. Email Resume to nhwpc14@gmail.com or mail to NHBC Student Minister Committee, 6573 Hwy. 145, Meridian, MS 39301. Deadline for submitting is December 14, 2013.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS 39180, IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH DIRECTOR. Please send resume to 6949 Highway 61 S, or email the church at ibc.secretary@bellsouth.net.

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Revivals & Homecomings

► Fairview Church, Indianapolis: 140th homecoming, Nov. 24; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch.

► Concord Church, Smith County: 160th anniversary, Nov. 24; worship service, 11 a.m., followed by lunch.

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Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Bible campaign going strong; still enough time to get involved

NASHVILLE (BP) — Through the end of November, customers at LifeWay Christian Stores can help send Bibles to individuals thousands of miles away. In a joint venture called The Thomas Project, LifeWay stores, B&H Publishing, and the International Mission Board are aiming to print and distribute at least 100,000 Bibles to people in South Asia, many of whom do not have Scripture in their own Hindi language.

Named for the disciple of Jesus who is believed to have been the first Christian missionary to the region, the initiative invites customers at LifeWay's 186 stores to purchase a Bible for five dollars to send to South Asia.

The Thomas Project is akin to the small collection boxes that have been placed at LifeStore store registers for world hunger relief and other mission causes over the years.

B&H, LifeWay's trade books division, worked out the details of printing Bibles near the distribution location in South Asia, with LifeWay's retail stores providing the avenue to reach individuals in the U.S. with the opportunity.

Bob Fuller, a retail store district director, said the project is "a wonderful example of how all the diversity of LifeWay can come together in perfect alignment to advance the cause of the Gospel."

Based on donations so far, Fuller is confident they will far exceed the goal, "once again demonstrating that God is able to do far above and beyond all that we ask or think."

William McGregor, also a retail store district director, shared a story of a customer in Colorado buying \$1,000 worth of Bibles for a prison ministry. Turning in his LifeWay Rewards card saved him \$300 on his purchase.

After he was asked about donating a Bible to The Thomas Project, the customer said, "I liked the first total better. Why don't we make up the difference with that project you were talking about?"

"I thought he had to be joking," McGregor said

about the \$300 donation, "but he really ended up buying 60 Thomas Project Bibles."

Fuller told of a customer who purchased three Bibles for The Thomas Project on a Monday. While working in her garden the following Friday morning, she felt led by God to return to the LifeWay store, still with dirt on her hands, to buy 100 more.

"I can only imagine that God used her time digging in the dirt that day to make her realize she had the opportunity to plant more eternally significant seeds and prompted her to return," Fuller said.

LifeWay stores not only are selling the Bibles, but retail employees will be part of a spring mission trip to South Asia to help deliver them.

One of the seven teams organized by LifeWay in 2014 will be connected with The Thomas Project. Because of the unique nature of the trip to South Asia, most of the 16 team members will be from the retail division and B&H, with four from four different retail stores — Texas, Utah, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Fuller will be leading the team and said his previous experience in South Asia led him to quickly agree to be a part of the trip, calling it a "tremendous blessing."

"I've seen firsthand both the deep need for and genuine acceptance of the Gospel in that fascinating part of the world," he said. "In spite of the multitude of world religions that dominate throughout that region, there is a wonderful openness and responsiveness to the Gospel."

The team will visit locations strategically selected by the International Mission Board and work with local church leaders and believers to distribute the Bibles. Additionally, they will be involved in direct evangelism and training.

Fuller said LifeWay store customers who aid the trip through The Thomas Project will make "an eternal difference in the life of whomever eventually receives the Bible they purchased."

Individuals interested in helping with The Thomas Project can go to any LifeWay Christian Store or visit LifeWay.com/ThomasProject.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

SEPTEMBER 2013

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Mrs. Letha Mae Letson Mitchell Mr. & Mrs. Danny L. Dilworth
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Teens from EBENEZER BAPTIST CHURCH IN HOLMES COUNTY held a canned food drive to help fill the pantries at The Baptist Children's Village. They collected canned fruits and vegetables, along with other non-perishable food and delivered those items to The BCV headquarters in Ridgeland.

Brewer	Mr. & Mrs. David Foreman
Mrs. Dorothy Rhines	Mr. & Mrs. James Jenkins
J. E. Pickering Jr.	Lessine Rice
Mr. & Mrs. Estes L. Carwile	The James Gardner Family
Linda Pickle	Mr. Henry Riser
Mr. & Mrs. James A. Alford	Mrs. Nancy F. Patrick
Lela Pope	Mrs. Eva Roberson
Arlington Heights BC	Bobby & Faye Ellis
Mrs. Marjorie Ramshur	Bruce Ellis
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Reed	Kevin & Kristy Ellis and Family
Bob Randle	Ricky Rollins
Dr. & Mrs. James H. Brewer	Mr. & Mrs. W. M. McElroy
Mr. Bruce G. Rawls	Wilhelmina Rollins
Dr. & Mrs. James H.	

Billy Scott	Mr. Joseph A. Combs, III
J. M. "Russ" Russell	Rev. Ted Shepherd
Mr. & Mrs. Hershel G. Turner	-Mr. & Mrs. Curtis A. Buchanan
	Dr. Robert Shideler
	Mr. & Mrs. Ernest L. Scruggs

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Baptist Children's Village has a new web site and we invite you to visit www.baptistchildrensvillage.com. There you will find our new video, historical information, contact information for each campus, a new and improved online donation form, information on how to connect with the ministry and much more!

Dealing with Death? • John 11:21-27, 33-44

One common thread that we each share is the lasting impact of death and the effect it leaves on all of us. Death does not discriminate. No matter a person's background, socio-economic standing, culture or religious beliefs; death will eventually take the life of someone we love deeply. Death, no doubt will visit us if the Lord chooses to wait in His return. The subject of death is not one any of us like to talk about or ponder. Some have the attitude of film maker Woody Allen. Allen once said, "I'm not afraid of death; I just don't want to be there when it happens." We all can appreciate the slight humor in that statement, but we are still left with the reality of death. The past few weeks we have been using chapters 7-10 in the Gospel of John to answer important questions. I hope as you read the Scripture, you will keep in mind the value of your questions.

Too many Christians shun questions. As I have written before, questions are the sign of an honest and growing faith. I find myself always wrestling with a question or two. If you have questions, you will hopefully want the answers. Good teachers raise useful questions. The good news is that most of the answers can be found

in the life and teachings of Christ. Unbelievers are filled with questions. The exciting thing is, we know the answer to their greatest questions! The answer is Christ. Obviously, we should not attempt to minimize someone's questions or concerns, but we will discover that our intellect cannot satisfy their greatest needs. Only Jesus and the redemption He provides can do that. But still, we are left with the reality of death. The fact remains that one day, a day unknown to all of us except God,

death will arrive at our doorstep. It will reach into our families, our friends, our neighbors, and cause us to hurt deeply. In fact, the deeper the love we have for someone, the deeper our grief will be.

This talk of death is not designed to be a morbid one. It is intended to be a conversation of healing and of hope. We encounter the matter of death in this week's



Explore the Bible with Bobby McKay

"ly moved in spirit," the evangelist writes, and then that shortest, bluntest verse in the entire New Testament: "Jesus wept."

If we could understand all that lay behind those tears, we would understand much about him, more maybe than it is well for us to understand; but to the degree that he was, whatever else, a human being like ourselves, we can understand at least something. It was presumably the naked fact itself that staggered him there in Bethany—death not as a distant darkness that his great faith was light enough to see him through; death not as a universal condition; but death as this death and darkness which he saw written across the swollen faces of the two women who stood there before him."

We all will face death on a personal level in our lifetime. How have you prepared to deal with it when it comes? Grief is normal and even healthy. Tears often indicate a love too deep for words. Sadness is a sign of humanity. Don't judge those who are hurting. Point them to Jesus with your life and compassion. I pray for you peace, hope and life everlasting.

McKay is pastor of Harperville Church, Harperville.

Thank You, Lord • Psalm 100:1-5

Here is a most sublime Psalm of thanksgiving and praise to be sung with gusto and a happy face and a heart bursting with love and thanksgiving. Even that band of servants called angels seek no other Master and can find no reason not to praise Him.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord is a repetition of the 4th verse of Psalm 98. Jehovah's goodness is seen in every land and therefore every land should praise the Lord. I wonder what would be the offshoot of every person over the entire globe, shouting out Vs. 1-5 of Psalm 100 at the exact same time. It's fun to even think about it, though it might jolt us into another orbit. We are told that when incense was burned in the temple, it filled the whole building. Our combined joyful shout might swamp the whole galaxy.

Charles Spurgeon said it is very questionable whether man can know himself until he knows his God. We learn who God is from Psalm 100. Jehovah is God alone and we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. That's very poetic but also a plain and knowable truth. As long as we receive his mercies, we must return praises to Him. Enter into His courts with thanksgiving and blessings for His Holy Name.

Psalm 100 is a strong invitation to wor-

ship God with freedom assured. The common folk were not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies, but they were to be made thankful for their place in the courts, wherever they were, and to be always cheerful about it. Serve him with gladness, as it is an honor to freely rejoice in the knowledge of Him. So how grateful should we Americans be that we have houses of worship in abundance which welcome us with open doors, and without fear of being persecuted by the heathens. We can but thankfully say "how good it is

to have this liberty of access to him and be in the house of the Lord," where we are to always mix praise and thanksgiving in our services. Can a Baptist go to a worship service and expect there to be no music? Perish the thought.

There are at least 7 things to know to complete our worship experience:

lesson by way of the familiar story of Martha, Mary and the death of their brother, Lazarus. Theologian Frederick Buechner offers keen insight into this passage. Read his words: "And *immediately* there was Lazarus, the friend from Bethany whom he loved and whose sisters he loved. When word was brought to him that Lazarus was ill, he said, "This illness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, and also for you, that you may believe in me."

treasure as among the most precious he ever spoke: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die." But when he went to Bethany and actually faced the sisters in their terrible grief, he could find for the moment no more such brave and hopeful words. "He was deep-

apparent. We are granted access to Him, and for this there must be thanksgiving.

(5) He is our bountiful benefactor as we are the sheep of his pastures. He made us, maintains us, and gives us all good things to enjoy.

(6) He is a God of infinite mercy and goodness. Infinite means everlasting, as a fountain that cannot run dry.

(7) His truth endures to all generations and no word from Him shall fall to the ground and disappear. This promise is sure from age to age.

This Psalm of love and praise teaches us that the Lord is God and we are his people.

Psalm 100 contains a promise of Christianity as winter at its close contains the promise of spring. It can put us in the mood for worshiping as if the saints and angels have joined us to celebrate and praise the Lord, and makes us want to abide in His presence and find the experience to be restorative. Should we seek the depths of his love? Yes. Will we ever know the depth of his love? No, not as long as we are earthbound.

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

RELIEF

cont. from p. 1

to MBCB, and note "Disaster Relief" on the memo line. Mail to MBCB, ATTN: Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

The Booc family soon realized the strength of Typhoon Haiyan as it bore down on Cebu. Their bamboo thatch house shook violently and they knew they could not stay. They ran in the midst of the typhoon's fury with their chil-

dren to take cover in a chapel with a concrete foundation.

During their flight a banana tree fell, miraculously missing them. They had to dodge flying sheets of tin that were blown off roofs.

The walls of the chapel were not built to withstand the winds. The family then ran to Michael's mother's house, which also was proving to be an unsafe structure. All of the homes in the area are made of lightweight materials such as bamboo, while the roofs are corrugated tin.

When their third place of ref-

uge lost its roof as the eye of the typhoon hovered over the village, the family decided to make a run for the high school that was nearly two miles away.

Jesusa said they thought Typhoon Haiyan would be the end of them. The family held hands. Jesusa reflected, "[If] we just wait, we will die." She, Michael, and their four children made it to the school.

After the storm, the Boocs returned to take shelter in the chapel but realized it was too hot, especially for their baby. The sunburn on Jesusa's baby's face had started

to peel when International Mission Board missionaries visited.

The village of 61 households had not yet received aid from the government as of Nov. 14, six days after the typhoon's onslaught. The government is providing families with several pieces of tin for their roofs and two kilos of rice for them.

Two kilos of rice does not last long in the Philippines. Rice is the staple meal for most families, and for a family of four it barely lasts a few days. A family normally eats around 10 kilos of rice in a week.

The community gathered to-

gether and shared what food and supplies remained in their village. The village name, Bangon, means, "rise up" in the Cebuano language. The villagers say they are people who indeed rise up from catastrophes.

"That is what we are," Wilma Booc, Michael's mother, says. "Our name gives us hope." They will rise up, they say. They are asking for help to lighten their burden and load. They know they cannot do it alone.

"We pray God will hear our prayers and help will come," Wilma says.

President taps So. Baptist leader to pray for him

WASHINGTON (BP) — U.S. President Barack Obama's request of Russell D. Moore was an opportunity for the Southern Baptist ethicist to apply the Bible's teaching on how Christians relate to governmental authorities.

During a meeting on Nov. 13 in the Oval Office at The White House in Washington, D.C., with religious leaders, Obama asked Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, to pray for him.

The request was "a joy," Moore said. "We disagree, sharply, on some very important issues, but the Bible calls on us to pray for our leaders and to show honor where honor is due. I stand on the other side of the president on many matters, but I love him and pray for God's wisdom and discernment and direction."

The President made the request of Moore during a meeting regarding immigration. Moore and the other seven largely evangelical Christian leaders met with Obama and Vice President Biden to discuss the opportunity to enact legislation soon to reform a system that nearly everyone acknowledges is badly broken.

Flaws in the system and its enforcement have resulted in an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the United States.

At the meeting, Moore called for cooperation between the

"We disagree, sharply, on some very important issues, but the Bible calls on us to pray for our leaders and to show honor where honor is due. I stand on the other side of the president on many matters, but I love him and pray for God's wisdom and discernment and direction."

Russell D. Moore
president of the
Ethics & Religious
Liberty Commission
of the SBC

White House and Congress in the effort.

"My message to the President is that there are many things that divide us as a country, but on this issue we have a remarkable consensus that the system is broken and the government isn't doing its job to keep the border secure, to shore up the economic health of the country, and to keep track of who is and isn't legally here."

"I urge the President and the Congress to work together to fix the system in a way that honors the rule of law and finds a way for those who've broken the law to make things right," said



OVAL OFFICE MEETING — Russell D. Moore (second from right), president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, and other religious leaders meet with U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. Vice President Biden Nov. 13 in the Oval Office at The White House in Washington, D.C., to discuss immigration reform. (BP photo courtesy of The White House)

Moore, who expressed gratitude that Obama and Biden took time to dialogue with the faith leaders.

The President also thanked the faith leaders for their work to reform immigration.

In addition to Moore, others who met with Obama, Biden, and senior administration officials were:

■ Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals.

■ Eusebio Elizondo, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Seattle.

■ Joel Hunter, senior pastor of Northland Church in Orlando, Fla.

■ Hyepin Im, president of

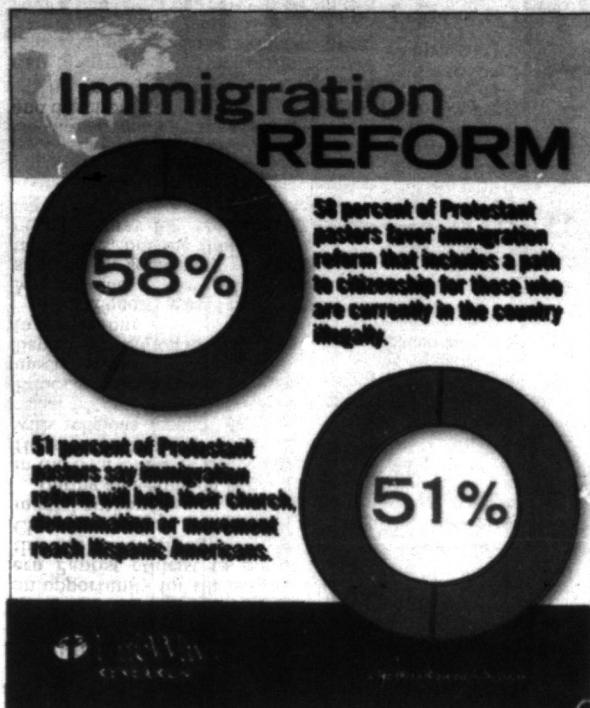
Korean Churches for Community Development in Los Angeles.

■ Mike McClenahan, senior pastor of Solana Beach Presbyterian Church in Solana Beach, Calif.

■ Gabriel Salguero, president of the National Latino Evangelical Coalition.

■ Jim Wallis, president of Sojourners.

LifeWay Research: Pastors moving toward immigration reform



NASHVILLE (BP) — Nearly six in 10 senior pastors of Protestant churches support immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship, according to a new survey from LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention headquartered in Nashville.

Many of the pastors hope reform will help them minister to more Hispanic Americans, but few say the current immigration system hurts current members of their churches.

The poll of 1,007 senior pastors of Protestant churches, conducted Sept. 4-19, comes as immigration reform has stalled on Capitol Hill. The U.S. Senate passed a bill this past summer that includes a path to citizenship, but a U.S. House of Representatives version of the bill seems dead.

"We have no intention of ever going to conference on the Senate bill," Speaker of the House John Boehner told reporters on Nov. 13.

According to the LifeWay Research survey, 58% of Protestant pastors agree with the statement: "I am in favor of immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship for those who are currently in the country illegally. Just over half (51%) agree that, 'Immigration reform will help our church, denomination or movement reach Hispanic Americans.'

Among pastors who say they are in favor of immigration reform with a path to citizenship, 67% agree it will help their church, denomination, or movement reach Hispanic Americans.

A number of denominations, including the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the United Methodist Church, have passed resolutions in favor of immigration reform in recent years.

Several national faith leaders, including representatives from the National Association of

Evangelicals, Southern Baptist Convention, and the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, met with President Obama Nov. 13 to discuss immigration reform.

About one in five Hispanic Americans (22%) identify themselves as Protestants, according to the Pew Hispanic survey.

Alejandro Mandes, national director of Immigrant Hope, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit that trains churches on how to assist immigrants, has been working on immigration reform for a decade. Protestant pastors and groups like the National Association of Evangelicals once were reluctant to get involved in immigration issues. That's changed, he said, as American culture and congregations have become more diverse.

"A lot of congregations have realized that they are now on a mission field," Mandes said, noting that churches will continue to assist immigrants even if Congress puts reform on hold. "For me, it is not about politics. It is about the Great Commission and the Great Commandment," he said.

Only 15% of pastors say members of their congregations are hurt by the immigration system. Meanwhile, pastors in the Northeast (57%) and Midwest (49%) say their church isn't negatively impacted by the current immigration system, compared to the South (42%) and West (33%).

Twenty-seven percent say immigration reform would help church members.

"Many Protestant churches are predominantly composed of one ethnic group," said Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research. "Therefore, many pastors do not have immigrant members, much less members who are personally affected by the current immigration system."